



BOXBOROUGH RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

PROGRAM GUIDELINES



June 15, 2017

I. Purpose

The Boxborough Rental Assistance Program (BRAP) provides rental assistance to income-eligible households who are renting qualifying housing units in the town of Boxborough. The goal of the program is to provide greater housing stability and housing opportunities to cost-burdened renters in Boxborough. The rental assistance available through the program will be provided for a period of one year in the amount of \$250/month to each participating household.

II. Background and Summary

Only about 22% of Boxborough's housing is affordable to very-low-income households. Unfortunately, the obverse is also true: 78% of the housing is not affordable to very-low-income households. Further, face-to-face contacts in the office of the Community Services Coordinator confirm that a significant number of Boxborough households are severely rent burdened (i.e., spend more than 50% of gross household income on rent).

The objective of the BRAP is to assist households with incomes that are less than those of households aided by Chapter 40B affordable housing. The BRAP assistance offsets participants' rental costs and reduces the risk of homelessness. In a wider sense, it enables cost-burdened households to expend funds on other necessary items, such as medical costs, transportation, and education. This program is intended to help households afford expenditures that will permanently improve their circumstances and will enable them to be self-sufficient. Ongoing contact with the Town's Community Services Coordinator is a requirement of the program.

The BRAP is funded by the Community Preservation Act (CPA). The CPA funding is appropriated at the Annual Town Meeting; as such the BRAP will make funding requests on an annual basis. Households are eligible for assistance if they are cost-burdened (i.e., the household spends more than 30% of gross income on rent). Participants are selected through a ranking system, which is described in more detail below. While the BRAP is not limited to current Boxborough residents, assistance will be available only for residential rental units within the Town of Boxborough. Applicants must identify an intended Boxborough address at the time of application. Participants are eligible for a maximum of three years of assistance, subject to funding, based on their individual program entry date. Households receiving any Federal or State housing assistance, such as Section 8, are not eligible to participate in the BRAP.

A third-party organization assists with the administration of the BRAP. The BRAP is currently funded at a level consistent with twelve participant households. These households will be assisted with monthly rental payments of \$250/month for one year, beginning on **October 1, 2017**. The payments will be made directly to the landlord.

The BRAP is sponsored by Boxborough's Well Being Committee and Housing Board. It was approved by the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) and by the 2017 Annual Town Meeting. It is entirely consistent with the CPA's support of community housing.

III. Application Process

The formal application period will be open for 60 days. All interested households, including those on the waitlist from previous years, must submit new applications each year. **Applications for assistance will be available by June 15, 2017 and must be submitted by August 15, 2017.** Rental assistance is expected to be disbursed to landlords on **October 1, 2017** and will continue for a one-year duration. Participants will be allowed to renew their assistance annually for a maximum of three years, subject to an eligibility review and the approval of future funding of the BRAP by the CPC and Annual Town Meeting.

BRAP applications and information packets will be available at the Boxborough Town Hall, the Sargent Memorial Library, the Town of Boxborough municipal website, and by contacting the Community Services Coordinator. Applicants have the right to request a reasonable accommodation to complete the application, which may include a change to a policy, procedure, or practice to afford a person with a disability an equal opportunity to participate fully in the housing program or to use and enjoy the housing.

All prospective households must submit a complete BRAP application form and all required supporting documents by the application deadline in order to be considered for selection. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed by the administering entity. Applicants who submit an incomplete application will be notified in writing of the deficiencies in their application and will have until the application deadline to correct these deficiencies.

IV. Eligibility

A. Applicant Eligibility

Appendix A presents income limits for this area. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) annually publishes the Area Median Income (AMI), adjusted for household size, for U. S. communities. For the Boxborough area, the 2017 median income for a four-person household is \$103,400. Area Median Incomes for other household sizes are provided in Appendix A.

For an applicant household to be eligible for the BRAP, it must meet the following criteria:

1. The annual household gross income must be less than 60% of the Area Median Income for the household size. The income limits for various household sizes are displayed in Table I below:

Table I
INCOME LIMITS FOR THE BRAP

Household Size	1	2	3	4	5
Income Must be LESS THAN	\$43,450	\$49,650	\$55,850	\$62,050	\$67,050

2. The household must spend more than 30% of its gross monthly income towards rental housing costs [including rent paid to the landlord and eligible utilities (heat, hot water, electricity, water and sewer)].
3. After assistance is awarded, a household must not pay more than 50% of its income on housing.

4. No household member can own a home or have any other ownership interest in real property.
5. The household must not be receiving assistance from a tenant-based rental assistance program funded and administered by the federal or state government, or any other entity.
6. The household must occupy the rental housing unit assisted through the BRAP as their primary residence.
7. The household must agree to work with the Town of Boxborough Community Services Coordinator to develop a strategy that supports a sustainable long-term housing situation.
8. The landlord must agree to accept BRAP payments, and the rental agreement between tenant and landlord must be at least a Tenancy-at-Will Lease.

B. Participant Renewal Limitations

1. So long as a household remains income eligible for the BRAP and lives in a qualifying unit, the household will be allowed to renew participation for a total of three years based on the first month of assistance for each household.
2. Participating households must submit documents to verify income and rent burden eligibility on an annual basis.

C. Unit Eligibility

1. Housing unit must be located in Boxborough, Massachusetts.
2. Housing unit must meet minimum safety standards.
3. The landlord must sign a BRAP participation agreement accepting payments from the Town of Boxborough toward the participating tenant's rent and submit a completed W-9 to the Town Accountant prior to disbursement of any funds.

V. Ranking and Selection Process

All households that qualify for the BRAP will be ranked according to Preference Criteria, and first preference for rental assistance will be awarded to the highest ranked households. Each household will be awarded Preference Points according to the Preference Criteria described below.

A. Low Income

Up to 20 Preference Points will be awarded for low income. The awarded points will be based on the household income, expressed as a percentage of the Area Median Income, as shown in the Table II.

Table II
LOW-INCOME
PREFERENCE POINTS

Points	HOUSEHOLD INCOME	
	From and Including	To Less Than
20	0 % AMI	20 % AMI
19	20 % AMI	28 % AMI
18	28 % AMI	32 % AMI
16	32 % AMI	35 % AMI
14	35 % AMI	37 % AMI
12	37 % AMI	39 % AMI
10	39 % AMI	41 % AMI
8	41 % AMI	43 % AMI
6	43 % AMI	45 % AMI
4	45 % AMI	48 % AMI
2	48 % AMI	52 % AMI
1	52 % AMI	60 % AMI

Appendix B further explains the low-income Preference Points and shows how they would be assigned to one-, two-, three-, and four-person households, according to their incomes. Preference-Point tables for other household sizes are available on request.

- B. **Rental Burden**
A household will be awarded 6 Preference Points if it pays more than 50% of its gross income towards rent.
- C. **Residence, School, or Work**
A household will be awarded 6 Preference Points if it currently resides in Boxborough, if a member of the household attends the Acton-Boxborough Regional School System, or if a member of the household works in Boxborough. Additional points will not be awarded if more than one condition is satisfied.
- D. **Young Children**
A household will be awarded 6 Preference Points if at least one household member is a child under the age of 18.
- E. **Seniors**
A household will be awarded 6 Preference Points if one or more members are age 60 or older.
- F. **Disabilities**
A household will be awarded 6 Preference Points if one or more members are disabled.

After the Preference Points are assigned, an ordered list of households will be created according to the number of points that have been awarded. Once all program-eligible applicants are ranked, all households will be notified of their ranking position and whether they will receive assistance.

If two or more households receive the same number of Preference Points, a lottery will be used to determine which household will have the opportunity to participate in the program. The lottery will be held in a publicly accessible space and applicant households will be invited to attend, but attendance is not required.

Households that are awarded rental assistance through the BRAP will receive a Commitment Letter from the administering entity detailing the terms of the rental assistance, including the amount of assistance provided, schedule of payments, program requirements, and the obligations of the tenant, landlord, and administering entity. Applicants will be required to sign and return the *Boxborough Rental Assistance Participation Form* acknowledging their intent to participate. If a household fails to return the *Boxborough Rental Assistance Participation Form* within 10 business days from the date of the Commitment Letter the household will lose its opportunity to participate in the BRAP.

VI. Right to Appeal

An applicant has the right to appeal decisions within 10 business days from the date of the written notification. An applicant may in person, in writing, or via a designee appear before an Appeals Committee. At the hearing, the applicant or his/her designee may present supporting information relevant to rejection or ranking. A final decision will be rendered by the Appeals Committee, in writing, within five business days from the date of the hearing.

VII. Applicant Pool and Waitlist

Households that have qualified for the BRAP, but were not ranked high enough to receive assistance, will remain in the applicant pool until the next application period opens. All applicants must reapply at the opening of each application period. A two-tiered waitlist will be maintained until the next open application period as follows:

- A. Tier 1 - Applications received by the deadline
Eligible households that submit completed applications by the deadline will be placed on Tier 1 of the waiting list in order of preference point ranking.
- B. Tier 2 - Applications received after the deadline
All completed applications received after the application deadline will be reviewed.
Eligible households that submit completed applications after the deadline will be placed on Tier 2 of the waiting list in order of preference point ranking.
- C. If assistance becomes available midway through the assistance period, for example due to a previously assisted household moving, then replacement households will be selected in rank order first from Tier 1 and then from Tier 2.

Households who do not respond to phone or mail inquiries or who do not respond to a request for additional information within the time frame provided shall be removed from the applicant pool.

VIII. Affirmative Marketing Methods

Affirmative marketing efforts will be intended to encourage maximum participation from low- to moderate-income households and members of the region's traditionally underserved racial and ethnic communities. The BRAP will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, disability, familial status, sex, age, marital status, children, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity, ancestry, veteran/military status or membership.

IX. Privacy

The entire application will be submitted to the Community Services Coordinator at Boxborough Town Hall. Personal information will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law except for necessary communications between a program participant, the landlord, and the program representatives. The application will be qualified and ranked by a small committee, who will review only the data relevant to qualification and ranking. This data will be stripped of any identifying information to ensure that your identity is kept confidential from the committee.

Appendix A AREA MEDIAN INCOME

The median income for Boxborough is published annually by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). For the Boxborough area, the 2017 median income for a four-person household is \$103,400. Area Median Incomes (AMI's) and income limits for other income categories and household sizes are provided in Table III below.

Several limits that are discussed above are highlighted in Table III. The very-low-income limit is defined as an income that is 50% of the AMI for a given household size. For example, a four-person household with an annual income less than \$51,700 (but more than \$31,050) is in the very-low-income category. The BRAP requires that the income of a household be less than the 60% income limit. For example, a four-person household with an annual income greater than \$62,050 would not qualify for the BRAP.

TABLE III
2017 INCOME CATEGORIES

Income Category	Household Size				
	1	2	3	4	5
Extremely Low (30% AMI)	\$21,750	\$24,850	\$27,950	\$31,050	\$33,550
Very Low (50% AMI)	\$36,200	\$41,400	\$46,550	\$51,700	\$55,850
60% AMI	\$43,450	\$49,650	\$55,850	\$62,050	\$67,050
70% AMI	\$50,700	\$57,950	\$65,200	\$72,400	\$78,200
Low (80% AMI)	\$57,950	\$66,200	\$74,500	\$82,750	\$89,400
90% AMI	\$65,200	\$74,500	\$83,800	\$93,100	\$100,550
100% AMI	\$72,400	\$82,750	\$93,100	\$103,400	\$111,700

Incomes for household sizes of one through five are shown in Table III. A method is given by HUD for the calculation of an arbitrarily sized household. The income limits in Table III are rounded up to the nearest \$50.

A household's income can be expressed as a percentage of the median income for the household. For example, the income of a four-person household with an annual income of \$40,000 is, expressed as a percentage of the median income, given by

$$\text{Income as \% AMI} = \frac{40,000}{103,400} = 38.7\%.$$

The income of a three-person household with an annual income of \$30,000 is, expressed as a percentage of the median income, given by

$$\text{Income as \% AMI} = \frac{30,000}{103,400} = 29.0\%.$$

APPENDIX B

LOW-INCOME PREFERENCE POINTS

The low-income Preference Points are described in Table II in terms of percentages of Area Median Income. These percentages can be translated into annual income ranges for a given household size using Table III in Appendix A. For example, 18 Preference Points will be assigned if a household's annual income is between 28% and 32%, according to Table II. For a three-person household, the median income is \$93,100, according to Table III. Then, for a three-person household, 18 Preference Points will be assigned if the household has an income between \$26,068 (28% x \$93,100) and \$29,792 (32% x \$93,100).

Table IV below gives the income ranges that apply to households of sizes one through four.

Table IV
LOW-INCOME PREFERENCE POINTS FOR SEVERAL HOUSEHOLD SIZES

Points	One-Person Household		Two-Person Household		Three-Person Household		Four-Person Household	
	From and Including	To Less Than	From and Including	To Less Than	From and Including	To Less Than	From and Including	To Less Than
20	\$0	\$14,480	\$0	\$16,550	\$0	\$18,620	\$0	\$20,680
19	\$14,480	\$20,272	\$16,550	\$23,170	\$18,620	\$26,068	\$20,680	\$28,952
18	\$20,272	\$23,168	\$23,170	\$26,480	\$26,068	\$29,792	\$28,952	\$33,088
16	\$23,168	\$25,340	\$26,480	\$28,963	\$29,792	\$32,585	\$33,088	\$36,190
14	\$25,340	\$26,788	\$28,963	\$30,618	\$32,585	\$34,447	\$36,190	\$38,258
12	\$26,788	\$28,236	\$30,618	\$32,273	\$34,447	\$36,309	\$38,258	\$40,326
10	\$28,236	\$29,684	\$32,273	\$33,928	\$36,309	\$38,171	\$40,326	\$42,394
8	\$29,684	\$31,132	\$33,928	\$35,583	\$38,171	\$40,033	\$42,394	\$44,462
6	\$31,132	\$32,580	\$35,583	\$37,238	\$40,033	\$41,895	\$44,462	\$46,530
4	\$32,580	\$34,752	\$37,238	\$39,720	\$41,895	\$44,688	\$46,530	\$49,632
2	\$34,752	\$37,648	\$39,720	\$43,030	\$44,688	\$48,412	\$49,632	\$53,768
1	\$37,648	\$43,440	\$43,030	\$49,650	\$48,412	\$55,860	\$53,768	\$62,040